

# The Church School Teacher

VOLUME XXVII

FEBRUARY 1958

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MAGAZINE FOR CHURCH SCHOOL WORKERS

# THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

Vol. XXVII No. 2  
FEBRUARY 1958

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# The Church School Teacher

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## A Few Words

by THE EDITOR

A CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER feature this year is the news stories from the Augustana Conference Commissions of Parish Education and the American Lutheran District Parish Education Committees. This month we have reports from Dr. Kenneth Andeen of Augustana Illinois Conference, the Rev. Carl F. Willen of ALC's Illinois District, and the Rev. Ervin Seidel of ALC's Wisconsin District. Our commissions and committees have asked for this kind of intercommunication. We think the reports will be helpful to all who read them. It is a great fraternity we have, we church school workers, and it is good to swap experiences and ideas.

### Exceptional People

Most churches and neighborhoods have people who are blind, crippled, deaf or mentally retarded. These persons we call "exceptional." They need special help.

Some time ago the National Council of Churches held a meeting for persons working with exceptional persons. Their findings have been recorded in a significant article written by Dr. Virgil E. Foster, editor of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. The article appears in this issue of THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER. Incidentally, your church school should subscribe to the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL, if it hasn't. Annual subscription, \$4.00. Send your subscription to Box 238, New York 10, N. Y.

### Dr. Linder and Dr. Knubel

Two friends and workers for the church school have been taken from the earthly life, Dr. Carl Linder and Dr. Frederick R. Knubel.

Dr. Linder was the editor-in-chief of the Wartburg Press, ALC's publication house. He was ALC's representative to the Chris-

tian Growth Series editorial staff and worked on the original CGS publication as well as its revision. He was also a heavy contributor to both planning and editing of ALC's American Uniform Series. Dr. Linder was not only a precise and indefatigable workman. He was a warm Christian brother and a man of imagination and good humor who loved people. During the past ten years it was my privilege to enjoy his fellowship in many Lutheran intersynodical meetings. But it was in the close Christian Growth Series co-operation of ALC, ULC and Augustana where I learned to know him best. By his own person he taught us many lessons in human relations. We shall not forget this Christian brother and fellow worker.

Dr. Frederick R. Knubel, president of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England was convinced of the importance of parish education. He was also personally involved in it

as a former member of ULCA's Board of Parish Education and as a tireless promoter of parish education in his own synod. Those of us who attended the Lutheran World Federation parish education luncheon will remember with appreciation this bishop who broke bread with us and supported our cause.

*O Lord God, Who, on account of sin, turnest man to destruction, so teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom. Grant us a true faith in Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification, and liveth forever. Give us grace to die daily from sin and so to live in accordance with Thy holy will, that in the hour of death we may be prepared for a blessed departure. Receive then our souls unto Thyself, and suffer our bodies, when they have rested in their graves, to rise on the last day to everlasting life. Amen.*

## Faith

While walking along a mountain path with his little daughter, a man came to a small stream bridged by a fallen log. The father told the child to take firm hold of his hand for safety.

The little girl hesitated. Then she said, "If I take hold of yours I might let go; but if you take hold of my hand, no matter what happens, you will never let go of me."

# From Your Director

by LAEL H. WESTBERG  
*Augustana Lutheran Church*

THERE are some helpful publications available on the subject of church drama, reprints from articles in the International Journal of Religious Education. We'll be glad to order them for you:

Basic Requirements for Church Drama—10¢

Lighting the Church Stage—10¢  
Creative Dramatics—5¢

Drama Is at Home in the Church—5¢

What's Gotten into Them—15¢  
Drama with Little Equipment—5¢

Rhythrical Movement in Christian Education—10¢

Please pay with your order. Add for postage and handling: 15¢ for each \$1.00 or portion thereof.

## Yellow Leaf

Mental Health Materials Center, Inc., has a 16mm. black and white motion picture film about the emotional adjustments to living in a home for the aged. It is recommended for church groups, women's clubs, parent discussion

groups, mental health societies and staffs of agencies and institutions concerned with the welfare of older people. It is titled *The Yellow Leaf*, rents for \$7.00 a day plus shipping cost both ways. You may order it from Mental Health Materials Center, Inc., 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

## Life Can Be Full

*The Yellow Leaf* dramatizes the problem of an elderly widow who has been living with her daughter and son-in-law. Frightened and reluctant, she enters a "home" at her daughter's request. With equal unhappiness and a strong sense of guilt her daughter takes her there. Gradually through the sympathetic support of another old lady at the home, she begins to look at the opportunities for purposeful activity and congenial companionship that are available to her. Instead of resigning herself to days spent in waiting for a visit with her daughter, she finds that her life can be very full indeed, and with a de-

gree of independence it was not possible to enjoy in her daughter's home.

Another film for rent at \$5.00 per day from the same organization dramatizes the facts about drinking and driving. This is prepared for high school students, to give them scientific facts about the effects of alcohol on human beings. It does not discuss the Christian implications of using alcohol. It is titled *None for the Road*.

A third film is titled *Six, Seven and Eight Year Olds—Society of Children*. It is rentable for \$7.50 per day by writing to New York University Film Library, 26 Washington Place, New York 3, New York. The film was produced by the Department of Child

Study, Vassar College, for these audiences: parents of young children, teachers and teachers in training, recreation leaders, group workers in community centers, settlement house, child psychology students and all who are interested in child development. It can be used for parent education, teacher training etc.

Mental Health Materials Center also has the following: *Baby Sitters*, a manual on basic training for baby sitters, 25¢; *What Is Marriage Counseling*, a pamphlet explaining marriage counseling, what it is and who does it, 25¢; *Your Child's Sense of Responsibility*, a pamphlet for parents and teachers on helping children grow in responsibility, 25¢.

## *Christ*

The *Chicago Tribune* Grafic Magazine recently shocked thousands of its readers. The cover painting, "The Smiling Christ," by Ivan Pusecker, a modern artist living in Columbus, Ohio, shows Christ, not with a halo around His head, nor with a look of agony in His eyes, but with a smile all over His face, as if He were looking into a baby's face and the little one were smiling, too. It takes almost a cerebral earthquake to rearrange our pious thinking cells so that they can with good conscience visualize a "smiling Christ." That, I think, is one of the shortcomings of our theology, both professional and popular.

—JOHN HELMER OLSON

# Director's Column

by R. A. VOGELEY  
*American Lutheran Church*

WHAT place should Bible study have in the life of a Christian? How important is the Bible to the average member of your church? What are you doing in Sunday school to develop skill in studying the Bible. What more can be done?

### The Bible Teaching Mission

In January samples of the material for the Bible Teaching Mission were mailed to every pastor and Sunday school superintendent in the ALC. The purpose of the Bible Teaching Mission is to increase our ability and skill in studying the Bible, in interpreting its message, and in making our own its grace and power. We are particularly interested in two phases of the Bible Teaching Mission.

A Teaching Mission offers an opportunity to help the confirmed members of the church to study the Bible, using a method of study which encourages participation,

questions, and the personal enrichment of the student.

Everyone realizes, of course, that only a limited amount of work can be done in five evenings. Of equal importance to the Teaching Mission itself is the follow-up which should be planned in every congregation.

The second important phase of the Teaching Mission in which we are particularly interested is the lesson material which has been prepared for use with the children in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. We would like to have reports from the teachers regarding this material. How did the pupils participate? Which was the most difficult session? What were the results? Some of us feel that much more intensive Bible study can be done by intermediates than has been done in the past.

### Home-Church Relationships

The importance of the home is constantly emphasized in Chris-

tian education. What attempts are you making in your congregation to relate the work of parish education effectively between the church schools and the homes of your congregation? Is the importance of home-church co-operation constantly emphasized? Are the ways of co-operation explained? Are parents encouraged to share in the Christian nurture of their children? Is this done as consistently as the work of evangelism is promoted or the work of the organization is emphasized?

How many homes in your congregation have regular family devotions? Are parents of preschool-age children using the devotions in the Bible Storytime Parents' Manual? We have received varied reports about the Parents' Classes. In some congregations the interest is very good and the attendance is quite regular. We, however, also hear that in some cases the attendance has not held up. Please let us know what is happening in your church.

#### **Church Workers' Institutes**

At first we had hoped that we might be able to have jointly planned and sponsored church

workers' institutes in certain districts in 1958. After trying to determine the type of courses which were needed by the ELC and the ALC we have come to the conclusion that in 1958 we should continue to sponsor our own institutes with the exception of Canada. Perhaps by 1959 a few institutes in the U. S. can be jointly sponsored.

#### **Vacation School Clinics**

In March three teams of leaders from the ELC, UELC, and ALC will conduct a series of regional meetings and vacation school clinics throughout the church. Our district committee members have been asked to select departmental leaders to attend these training sessions so that vacation school clinics centers can be established in all parts of the church. These clinics will be mutually sponsored by the ALC, ELC, and UELC parish education committees. The clinics should be held sometime after Easter.

We are glad to report that the lesson material in 1958 will have activity packets and will be printed in color. The vacation school material is called *God's Holy Law*.



A Potential Source for Good . .

# The Weekday Church School

by JORDAN L. LARSON

*Superintendent of Schools,  
Mount Vernon, New York  
Past President, American  
Association of School Administrators*

THE weekday program of religious education in New York State conducted by religious organizations on released time is permissible under section 3210 of the Education Law which provides that "Absence for religious observance and education shall be permitted under rules that the commissioner shall establish."

Accordingly, the Commissioner of Education of the State of New York established the following regulations (Art. 17, sec. 154):

1. Absence of a pupil from school during school hours for religious observance and education to be had outside the school building and grounds will be excused upon the request in writing signed by the parent or guardian of the pupil.
2. The courses in religious observance and education must be maintained and operated by or under the control of a duly constituted religious body or of

duly constituted religious bodies.

3. Pupils must be registered for the courses and a copy of the registration filed with the local public school authorities.
4. Reports of attendance of pupils upon such courses shall be filed with the principal or teacher at the end of each week.
5. Such absence shall be for not more than one hour each week at the close of a session at a time to be fixed by the local school authorities.
6. In the event that more than one school for religious observance and education is maintained in any district, the hour for absence for each particular public school in such district shall be the same for all such religious schools.

Within the law and pertinent regulations, a number of boards of education adopted policies to provide for released time for attend-

ance at the weekday school of religion. Included among these was the Board of Education of the City of New York. By court action brought against the members of the latter board of education by Tessim Zorach and Esta Gluck, the constitutionality of the law permitting absence for religious observance and education was challenged. This case has been referred to as the Zorach case. It was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States and the constitutionality affirmed.

### **The Court's Opinion**

Mr. Justice Douglas delivered the opinion of the court on April 28, 1952. Among other things, he pointed out the difference in this case and the McCollum case. Here all classes are held outside the school buildings and grounds. In Illinois, in the McCollum case, the classrooms were turned over to religious instructors. Here the question was one of mere accommodation of schedules to a program of outside religious instruction and not one of using school facilities to promote that instruction.

In the majority opinion of the Supreme Court in the Zorach case are several significant statements which merit repeating. I quote: "We would have to press the concept of separation of Church and State to these extremes to con-

demon the present law on constitutional grounds. The nullification of this law would have wide and profound effects." . . . "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses." . . . "When the state encourages religious instruction or co-operates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions." . . . "Government may not finance religious groups nor undertake religious instruction nor blend secular and sectarian education nor use secular institutions to force one or some religion on any person." . . . "The government must be neutral when it comes to competition between sects." . . . "It may not coerce anyone to attend church, to observe a religious holiday, or to take religious instruction. But it can close its doors or suspend its operations as to those who want to repair to their religious sanctuary for worship or instruction. No more than that is undertaken here."

### **Brings Encouragement**

The decision of the Supreme Court that the laws and regulations governing released time in New York were not in conflict with the principle of separation of Church and State has given encouragement to the supporters of the Weekday Church Schools.

For over sixteen years, pupils in the public schools of Mount Ver-

non, New York, have been excused an hour before the regular dismissal time one day each week for the purpose of attending scheduled programs of religious instruction carried on outside the schools by various religious groups. For almost twelve of these years, I have served as Superintendent of Schools in this city and have personally observed the fine spirit of mutual co-operation with and between the religious groups and the school people in this program.

More than a fourth of all children in the elementary grades from one through six have availed themselves of religious instruction offered by Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups. A smaller number of pupils in the secondary schools participated.

### **"A Shared Program"**

Through comments received from leaders in the religious groups, it is clear that there is a growing interest in the program and that it is a potential source of good in the training of these young people. While the measurement of success must be left to the supporting church groups, the sense of true values permeates the schools and the community. In many ways then, it may be viewed as a shared rather than a released time program. It recognizes the separate rights of both church and state yet shares in the total edu-

cational training of the child, each within appropriate and defined areas.

Although I speak only as an individual, I know that a great majority of our school administrators in America have strong religious beliefs and convictions and are willing to co-operate with various religious organizations in the matter of weekday released time within the limits of their authority under state laws and local regulations in conformity with them.

### **Mutual Respect**

The separation of church and state as we understand it is not a separation of religion and state, nor opposition to any religion by the state, nor by the public schools which are created by the state. Rather, there is ample evidence of mutual respect and co-operation between church and school in the records which show that church membership has grown from year to year to the point where we now have the greatest membership we ever had, both as to number and as to percentage of our population, in the history of our country. This shows that our public schools, though non-sectarian have proved to be an asset in the religious progress of our nation. And for this record, every school administrator can well be proud. It should dispel any fears of the uninformed or

the misinformed occasioned by the few desultory remarks that the public schools are godless.

Ill intended remarks of this kind not only are directed at the public schools but against every teacher who teaches in them. If true, they would constitute a serious indictment of a million teachers. They would indict the public school children and their parents. It must be made crystal clear that the limitations imposed by our constitution on the teaching of sectarian religions in our schools do not make them godless, nor label our teachers as godless. On the contrary, many of our teachers teach Sunday School, sing in the choir, act as leaders in young people's organizations, serve on committees and boards and otherwise support the work of their church. They share in the work of religious organizations to a greater degree than those in any other profession.

#### A Favorable Climate

The public schools follow the long and established tradition that although the responsibility of teaching religion lies with the home and the church, those serving in the public schools must continue to maintain a climate favorable to religion and to co-operate with religious organizations in their communities.

With a strong desire for a better program of religious education ex-

pressed by religious groups and with the co-operation of a large number of public school administrators the weekday church school has developed into a potential force for good in furthering religious education. In looking at the weekday church schools from the viewpoint of a superintendent of schools, these six points appear essential to a successful program:

#### To Avoid Pitfalls

First is a good *background*. Before undertaking such a program, a study group should be organized to review all the books, pamphlets, reports, state laws, and other related materials that are available which will provide sufficient knowledge and information about the program necessary and helpful in getting off to a good start. Adequate information will assist in planning, will aid in determining goals and standards to be met, and will avoid pitfalls that can work to the detriment of the program.

The second requirement is *initiative*. After gaining the necessary background information for the weekday school, the group might well observe the motto, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead!" And DO IT! There must be more than mere know-how. There must be a feeling of *how-how* it shall be done. The church groups must have or acquire the zeal to provide for all the facets to get the

program started. The initiative should be taken by the best leadership the church groups can produce and this more than anything else will insure the success of the program. It calls for first team play!

The third essential is *co-operation*. There must be close co-operation with and between all religious groups sponsoring the weekday church schools to bring about the desired results. Working together on details of the time and place of the schools, securing uniformity in registration and attendance reports and gaining the support of parents desiring this program so that the efforts can be united on the general goals and standards, and any differences can be reduced to the minimum. Co-operation with the schools should begin early in the planning stages and in working out details affecting both schools and the religious groups. In turn, school administrators should share in creating an atmosphere friendly to the program.

#### Co-operative Responsibility

The fourth point I would emphasize is *responsibility*. There must be a clear understanding on who is to do what and to whom. For example, the parents and not the schools are responsible to see to it that the pupil arrives at his religious instruction center and uses his released time to the fullest extent. The religious groups must

provide for the organization, the finances and the teaching necessary for effective results. They are also responsible for prompt and accurate reporting of attendance to school officials and for taking appropriate action to prevent discrepancies regarding non-attendance. The schools are responsible for prompt dismissal of pupils for such weekday schools whose parents have requested such release. These pupils should be dismissed in the usual way and teachers should avoid making any comments regarding such early dismissals other than announcing them. If each party assumes the proper share of responsibility that it should, no obstacles should stand in the way of success of the program other than those lying within the sponsoring groups.

#### Evaluation

The fifth point is *follow-up*. Every good program requires follow-up. No program can run by itself. Follow-up consists of talking with teachers, children, and parents to ascertain if the goals or high standards of the weekday school are being met and how well or poorly. If the attendance is falling off, what are the reasons? What are the resources in materials and the curriculum, that help or hinder proper instruction, where is greater assistance needed and why? These can be answered

only after adequate follow-up on the work being done.

And, sixth, we need to *look ahead*. Every great movement has had a small beginning. We cannot measure the good things we do in terms of days, but rather in terms of years or even centuries. Hence in any plans that are made for weekday schools such as we have been talking about, we must take the long look ahead and try to visualize what effects our program will have on the lives of our children and on their posterity. We must look to the great potential in this field. We might well pose this question: If this type of program can meet the needs of religious education desired by the various religious denominations to the extent that all of them can otherwise unite in supporting the public schools of our country and in encouraging their children to attend them, the ultimate achievement toward greater unity and co-

operation between all religious groups and the public schools may exceed that of our present dreams.

It is a program that has unlimited potential for the betterment of both the religious groups and the public schools, and such potential should be analyzed by all of us who hold dear the tenets of our religion and have faith in our public schools, and who also believe that the strength of both are enhanced by the separation of church and state.

Released time for religious instruction, as it operates in our community and state, conforms to our strong belief in this traditional principle of separation of church and state and does not discriminate between children of any faith, or those of no faith. It is worthy of consideration by any community in improving the relationship between the schools and community institutions and organizations dedicated to religious instruction.



► American Lutheran Church

## News from Wisconsin District

by REV. ERVIN SEIDEL  
*St. Stephen Lutheran Church*  
*Wausau, Wisconsin*

PROBABLY most of you have seen ads in national magazines entitled "The Wausau Story." A big insurance company which has its home office in Wausau depicts various scenes which are typical of our friendly city. Naturally we are happy to be a part of such a community. This article, however, isn't "The Wausau Story." Rather, we would like to give you glimpses of the work of Parish Education in the Wisconsin District—glimpses that show you why we are happy to be a small part of the "machinery" which turns the wheels of Parish Education in Wisconsin.

### The Wisconsin Story

A recent development in the work of Wisconsin Parish Education has given us cause for joy and thanksgiving. We are referring to the co-operative efforts of the ELC, UELC, and ALC in planning and conducting joint Daily Vacation Bible School clinics this

spring. It is a foretaste of Parish Education work in the new merged Church. This all came about when last September the ELC and ALC Wisconsin Parish Education committees met with Dr. R. A. Vogeley, Director of Parish Education of the ALC, and Dr. C. Richard Evenson, Parish Education Director of the ELC. Since this was the first meeting of this group there were numerous items to be discussed and planned. It was felt that the Wisconsin District would be a good test of such a co-operative venture since the membership of the ELC and ALC is approximately equal in this state. In October a group of ELC, UELC and ALC committee members met to select the centers for these Daily Vacation Bible School clinics. Twenty centers were established in Wisconsin. A dean will be appointed for each of these twenty centers and together with their faculty will attend a training session for DVBS clinics which

will be conducted at Madison on March 4. We ask that you pray for God's blessing on the beginnings of this co-operative venture in the work of Parish Education.

#### **Church Workers' Institutes**

A number of people in Wisconsin will recall our very first Church Workers' Institute. It was conducted at Trinity Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, Wisconsin, in July, 1949. The beginnings weren't spectacular, but nevertheless, seeds were sown which resulted in continued growth. Since this first institute, eight institutes have been conducted at our Church Camp near Clintonville. When the Board of Parish Education inaugurated the TTT workshops in 1952, the Wisconsin District sent some zone instructors to the regional workshops in Iowa. The beginnings of zone institute work in Wisconsin were small also, but here too there has been growth. Since 1955 the Wisconsin District has had its own TTT workshop in connection with the Church Workers' Institute. Our district is divided into ten zones, each of which conducts a zone institute in the fall of the year. Thus more and more of our teachers have been trained so that they might become more effective instruments for God. By 1959 the Wisconsin District will probably conduct several Church Workers' Insti-

tutes since by then we hope to make this area of Parish Education another joint venture with the ELC and UELC.

#### **Post-Confirmation Bible Classes**

This portion of "The Wisconsin Story" isn't all that we would like it to be. Even as late as five years ago we would have been more comfortable if no one had checked the statistics on our post-confirmation Bible classes. We are, however, thankful for the growth in this work and are confident that by the grace of God more and more people will be brought into a closer relationship with Christ through the means of Bible classes for young people and adults. Probably the advent of Parents' Classes in our ALC stimulated the growth of new classes more than any other one factor. Those congregations which are conducting Parents' Classes have been rewarded by the increased home co-operation, and incidentally, also because this group has become a good source of future teachers. Some congregations have organized a Bible Story-time Parents' Class and report good interest in this group. We hope that many more congregations will take advantage of this fine help.

#### **There Is Joy in the Work**

We have given you a few facts and figures. These, however, are

not the heart of Parish Education. It is *our reaction* to the statistics and facts that determines how effective our program will be. Also, not all growth in God's kingdom can be measured in numbers. But as one watches the evidences of growth here and there, the heart is filled with joy and thanksgiving to God. Oh yes, the disappointments and discouraging reports concerning Parish Education are also a part of the story. And because we are human there are times when we inwardly "fume."

But because we are Christian, those discouragements become a matter of prayer and an increasing realization of our dependence on God. In fact, I sometimes suspect that these disappointments are God's way of pulling the heart-strings so that our concern for the work of Parish Education grows rather than diminishes. And thus it is that every pastor, every teacher, and every concerned Christian thrills to the work of the Teaching Ministry of the Church!



**► American Lutheran Church**

## *News from Illinois District*

by REV. CARL F. WELLER  
*St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
Urbana, Illinois*

THE work of the Illinois District Parish Education Committee is largely in the planning stages for 1958 at the time of this writing. The major project of the committee is the Illinois District Church Workers' Institute held each summer for a week of intensive study for the church workers of the District. The plans for 1958 call for the Church Workers' Institute to be held at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois, June 30 to July 4. The courses scheduled are similar to those offered by other institutes, namely Bible study, departmental courses, and a general course of interest to all. The American Lutheran Church Parish Workers' Association has accepted the invitation of the District Committee to hold its annual meeting at the same time and place. We feel fortunate that this important group of full-time church workers will

spend the week with us and share in our Institute.

### **Day School**

Another added feature of the 1958 Institute are the plans being made for a meeting of the Christian Day School boards, pastors, and principals of the District, to be held Monday morning and afternoon, June 30. The meeting of this special interest group will begin at 10 a.m. with a member of the Department of Parish Education reviewing the help offered by the office staff to Christian Day School boards, pastors, and principals. Other topics tentatively scheduled for the meeting are "The Function of the Local Day School Board," and "Further Needs of our Growing Day Schools."

The Illinois District Committee is also helping with the preparatory work for the Bible Teaching

Mission scheduled under the "Spiritual Growth in Five Dimension" program of the ALC for 1958. The Northern Conference and the Peoria Conference pastors have already been instructed in the materials and procedures. By the time this is printed, the Chicago Conference and the Southern Conference pastors will have been informed in detail about the plans for the Bible Teaching Mission. The attendance at the Northern and Peoria Conference meetings indicates that about 50 per cent of the pastors are being trained to conduct Bible Teaching Missions and that about 50 per cent of the congregations are seriously considering adding the Bible Teaching Mission to their program for 1958. It is hoped that by the time final statistics are compiled, virtually every congregation in the District will take part in this program.

#### Association

In these days when "Sunday School Teachers' Associations" are out of fashion, it is interesting to note that a new organization of

Sunday school teachers came into existence in Northwestern Indiana on November 10, 1957. The congregations represented were: St. Paul's, Michigan City; St. Luke's, Michigan City; Hope, Crisman; Immanuel, Gary; and St. Luke's, Hammond. 120 attended to organize the association and, among other things, had "Miss Indiana of 1957" as a speaker. The Illinois District has more Sunday school teachers' area associations than any other District in the ALC. According to all reports, their fall rallies were well attended and offered fine inspirational and instructive programs.

#### DVBS

The members of the Illinois District Committee are alerted to the Daily Vacation Bible School materials being prepared for 1958. The response to the DVBS clinics held last year was heartening. We are planning to have the entire District covered with DVBS clinics so every congregation can be represented and learn about the new materials offered by our Church.

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*When things go wrong, don't go with them.*

## ► Augustana Lutheran Church

*News from the Illinois Conference*

by DR. KENNETH ANDEEN

*Augustana College**Rock Island, Illinois*

THE Illinois Conference Commission on Parish Education conceives its task to be threefold. It seeks to interpret and implement the work of the Church Board of Parish Education at the conference level. It assists in promoting leadership education throughout the districts of the Conference. The Commission also occasionally initiates educational studies which it believes will be helpful to Conference churches.

**Interpreting the Work of the  
Board of Parish Education**

The Commission encourages the use of the materials and programs published and recommended by the Board of Parish Education. It has noted, with satisfaction, that most of the churches of the Conference use the *Christian Growth Series*, the Augustana Sunday school papers, THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER, and other materials being supplied by the Church Board. At times representatives of the Commission have met with individual congregations

to study these materials and to help them understand the most effective way in which they can be used. Careful planning has been given by the Commission, in co-operation with the Board of Parish Education, in planning for the Teacher Teach Teacher programs and the "Together" program, with the Board of Youth Activities. The program of the Church Board is presented at Conference meetings and wherever the Commission members have an opportunity of presenting the cause.

**Promoting Leadership Education**

The most important task of the Conference Commission is to give guidance to leaders in the local parishes and in the districts. This has been given primarily through the TTT schools. These schools were originally established by the Board of Parish Education in the Conference, with the help of the Commission. The Church Board supplied personnel and materials and the Commission assisted in scheduling the TTT schools at

strategic places throughout the Conference. Now that the Conference has been carefully covered by these Conference schools, the Commission has been encouraging the districts to carry this excellent program. In many instances the TTT schools are now being conducted as area schools or even as schools within individual congregations. There is available, through the Conference Commission, a list of well-trained personnel who are available as teachers and leaders for the district and local TTT schools. It is through this method that the congregations have been encouraged to establish a sound program of teacher education for the Sunday school.

#### District Directors

The Conference Commission has found it advisable to have selected in each district of the Conference a District Director of Parish Education. Each year the directors from the various districts have met with the Conference Commission in order that they might be briefed on the work of parish education in the church and be given specific helps in carrying out a program of education within the district. Two primary responsibilities have been given to the district directors. They have been instructed to arrange one district meeting with the pastors on the theme of "Parish Education"

each year. They have also been encouraged to establish TTT schools or some kind of parish education rallies for the teachers of the district. There has been a very enthusiastic response on the part of some district directors to this important task of parish education.

Each summer, for some years, the Conference Commission has arranged and promoted a summer workshop in parish education at Camp Augustana on Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. This workshop is conducted for three days and has been of great value to those who have attended. The program has varied from year to year, always keeping in mind the specific needs of Sunday school teachers and superintendents. In this way it has been a part of the educational program of the Commission. Exceptional leaders have been obtained as teachers and, even more important, exceptional teachers and Sunday schools have come together with their years of experience to share not only their problems but also their insights in Christian education. It is through the summer workshop that the members of the Conference Commission have become acquainted with many of the leaders from local parishes.

#### Educational Studies

From time to time the Commission has found it of value to carry on studies of its own, the

results of which have been passed on to the Board of Parish Education and to the churches of the Conference. Such studies have been made of confirmation instruction, of the requirements and materials that should be minimal standards for church membership courses, and attention has been given to recruitment program of the church school, both in relationship to students and teachers. At the present time, the Illinois Con-

ference Commission is giving thought to the type of educational work which can be carried on in the auxiliary organizations of the church.

Illinois Conference Commission is composed of four laymen and two pastors, at the present time. The Commission meets three times each year and encourages all of its members to be present at the summer workshop at Camp Augustana.

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*She thinks no man is good enough for her.*

*She may be right.*

*She may be left.*



# Nature Study Is Notable Accompaniment to Bible Study

by EVELYN WITTER

FROM primaries through adult classes nature study augments and makes clearer and more forceful what we read about God's wonderful world in the Bible. You do not have to be a scientist to teach nature along with Biblical lessons. With a simple guide to enable you to know what to look for, each month can bring forth some of nature's wonders for the interest table. How deeply you go into the explanations will depend on which age levels you are teaching.

Here are some nature guides I have used successfully with primaries and which teachers of juniors and intermediate groups have also used. These guides have kept the interest tables *interesting* the year around!

## January

If you know where there is a white birch tree you will find that under it the ground will be peppered with curious specks. Under

a magnifying glass you will see that each one of these specks looks like a miniature eagle or hawk, with wings and tail spread.

Your students will ask you, "But what are these?"

The answer is: these are "seed-birds" from the birch's seed catkins.

If you can reach up into the tree and secure one of these seed-holders whole, you can perform a pretty experiment by pinching off the hard little scale at the tip. This frees the whole mass of seeds, and they will fall in a steady stream, until only a bare stem is left. Since each catkin contains nearly a thousand "birds" you can point out that this is the reason you sometimes see whole groves of closely set white birches.

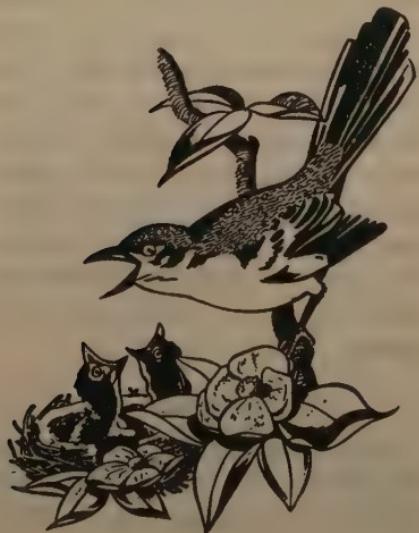
## February

It is a charming surprise to find that during this month the Pussy Willow is pushing out its little

gray pussies from their brown scales. This surprise never fails to give enjoyment to old and young alike. And too . . . Pussy Willow branches in a vase on the interest table inspire talk of the coming of the new season and appreciation of the renewal of growing things.

### **March**

Since March is the "wakening month," animals appear which sleep or hide through the cold months. The badger and the chipmunk are among these. Pictures of these animals are readily available at most libraries. Pictures of migrating birds for the interest table are available also. You might want to choose some of the best known like the robin, bluebird, red-winged blackbird, cowbird and the phoebe.



There is a March butterfly too, the Mourning-Cloak.

Wild flowers of the month are: Adder's Tongue, Trout Lily, Arbutus, Skunk Cabbage, Hepatica, Spring Beauty, Wake Robin, Saxifrage. Colored pictures of some of these certainly belong on the March interest table.

### **April**

In April nature is awake for the summer and every day new growths are springing out. The trees are pushing out their first bursts of tender green, and many are in blossom. The lengthening and opening of bud scales give varied tints of red, and many leaves are rosy or lilac tinted, when they first open. At this stage they are most interesting for the interest table. A display of some of these inspires tree identification among the pupils so you want to be sure you know the names of the species you bring.

Buttercups are in flower. There are early violets in the woods. (Might be dug up, dirt and all, and brought to Sunday school.)

Cabbage butterfly is seen everywhere. It would not be too difficult to get a specimen. There are other butterflies in April too . . . Dusky-wing, Comma, Sooty Wing, Zebra Swallowtail. Students may be asked if they have any of these with the explanation that these are

the species that emerge in April.

### May

The trees in May offer many lovely sights. The horse-chestnut is in bloom. The upturning branches, like the arms of a candelabra, are each tipped with a white blossom cluster pointed like a candle flame.

The red oak is another tree with very abundant blossoms. Beautiful, fringe-like, pollen-bearing strings droop from twigs in clusters.

Also the majority of field flowers are coming into blossom and there are a great many different kinds of butterflies on the wing.

If you stroll through the moist May woods you will perhaps come upon little mauve-winged blooms among the mosses. This flower, FRINGED POLYGALA, holds a secret worthy of any interest table. You can tell the pupils that it doesn't matter if they pick this flower or not when they come across it because picking it won't prevent the spreading of its seed; for this plant has a secret. You can reveal the secret if you've dug the plant up with soil around it. Bare the roots and you'll see FRINGED POLYGALA has a crop of underground flowers which produce seeds all by themselves!

### June

June is the high-tide of the year's life. Gardens are so lovely and



flowers so luxuriant you need not search far for nature's beauties for the interest table.

### July

This month you are very apt to find the unusual with which to interest your Sunday school pupils. For example: If you come upon a sassafras bush you will want to dig out a bit of the fragrant, delicious root to chew for its spicy flavor. You might offer a piece of sassafras root to your pupils as July's contribution to the never ending wonder of nature.

This is also the time for hunting for a hummingbird's nest. But it is a rare and difficult thing to find, being no larger than an English walnut. It is a difficult thing to distinguish it from the knot on a limb of a tree.

But July is a time of profusion and plenty among nature's won-

ders. You can choose and pick a spectacle of flowers, trees and insects.

### **August**

Hay and grain fields have turned from green to yellow. Shafts of these on the interest table are appropriate and timely. The story of August is in easily available materials . . . the feathery, ballooning seeds of the dandelion, the milkweed, and the cat-tail. These simple things are a guide to a finer appreciation of the wonderfully conceived universe we live in.

### **September**

September is the beginning of nature's resting period. This is a good time to go "cocooning." Bring home the cocoons you find, put them away in a shoe box and keep them after the pupils have tried to identify them with the aid of pictures of cocoons (with which a librarian can furnish you).

Lay each one on a piece of paper, marked with the name the group has decided on. Then sometime next April, bring the box back to Sunday school, and each Sunday take a look at the collection. During May you should be rewarded by seeing most of the butterflies and moths come out in all their beauty! Then you can compare each mature insect with a color picture and find out how accurate

your identification of the cocoon was.

Goldenrods and purple asters make the September interest table lovely with color.

### **October**

This is the time to bedeck the table with yellow, scarlet and purple-hued leaves.

### **November**

This is bird feeding month. All the birds have not gone south . . . chickadees, kinglets, juncos, partridges, goldfinches, tree sparrows, blue jays, downy woodpeckers, hairy woodpeckers, flickers, nut-hatches, cedar waxwings, snow buntings . . . to mention some, will all be seen in the northern winter.

Therefore birds' feeding stations could be the theme of the November interest table. For example: Take a bare branch and to it attach two orange halves which have been scooped out and two holes punched into each half through which string to hang the "orange baskets" has been drawn. Fill one orange half with water the other with bread crumbs.

Appreciating winter birds and helping them to survive is excellent study.

### **December**

This month is the month to see what birds' nests are made of. This

leafless time furnishes an excellent opportunity, for dozens of nests which were completely concealed by summer foliage are now revealed.

Many birds have "specialties" for which they show special preferences for nesting materials. Some of these "specialties" may help you identify the nests you find:

Wren—feathers

Chipping sparrow—horsehair and roots

Snowbunting—fox hair

Purple finch—hog bristles and horsehair

Robin—grass and mud

Baltimore oriole—milkweed bark, horsehair and long moss

Hummingbird—fern wool, red oak leaf down.

Another December wonder is the thistle. If you will follow downward the dried remains of a thistle, as it sticks out of the snow, you will find next year's thistle plant, already green, in the form of a beautiful flat rosette of leaves, nestling around the stalk next to the ground.

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### Age Level Research

When a woman says she hasn't yet seen forty,  
perhaps her vision isn't twenty-twenty.

You may be able to make some people think you are younger than you are, but you can't fool a hamburger sandwich just before bedtime.

You've reached middle-age when you know how to take care of yourself—and intend to, one of these days.

# Exceptional Persons Need the Church, Too

by VIRGIL E. FOSTER, *Editor,*  
*International Journal of Religious  
Education*

NO ONE is harder to find, or duller when he is found, than the "average man." Most persons are "exceptional" in that they differ from the "average" or "norm," have unique problems as individuals, and fail at some points to fit into the blur of normalcy that everyone expects everyone but himself to fit. It is when a person's "exceptionality" causes him to break aggressively with the social patterns or makes it difficult for him to conform to them that he becomes the object of concern as an "exceptional person." His need for special attention may result from unusual mental gifts; from frustration bringing on emotional disturbance and rebellion; or from a physical or mental impairment. Whatever the condition, such an individual must be understood and appreciated first of all as a person if he is to be understood as one who needs special attention to his exceptional needs.

Centuries ago handicapped per-

sons were rejected and put to death. Later there was a time when they were made sport of. Slowly through the years, their worth as persons has come to be appreciated. The right of persons who have handicaps or exceptional gifts to fill a respected and valued role in society without being a problem is at last coming to be recognized. Increasingly they are being given education or special training, vocational opportunity, and a place of recognition in the community.

The Christian church has helped to bring about this change in attitude, through its emphasis on the worth of persons. Yet, the church is still failing at many points in its program to act in accord with its own historic conscience in the matter.

There is a growing restlessness about this failure; and a consultation on the church's responsibility to exceptional persons was held on October 4 and 5, 1957. The con-

sultation was called by the National Council of Churches and was attended by about fifty representatives of denominational departments of Christian education, councils of churches, and agencies working with exceptional persons.

It was recognized that the need for a better ministry to exceptional persons is universal. Nearly every church and community include persons who have weak hearts or are hard of hearing, blind, or crippled, and others who are mentally retarded.

It was felt, especially by representatives of the agencies, that churches are doing more than is usually recognized in serving exceptional persons, and that a better reporting of these efforts, in itself, would be of great value. Yet, there are many ways in which churches could make a more effective adaptation of their activities to special needs.

#### A Step Toward Co-operation

It became increasingly clear at the consultation that neither the churches nor the specialized agencies alone can serve exceptional persons adequately. The work of each is incomplete without that of the other. It was hoped that the consultation could be a step in the direction of much closer co-operation.

In presentations and discussions in the plenary sessions and in the

work groups, attention was given first to understand the needs to be met, then to preparing recommendations for members of the consultation and all who share their concern.

#### Principles to remember

The insights shared concerning exceptional persons may be summarized in six principles which were lifted up.

1. Exceptional persons are more like than unlike other persons. Their personal needs are essentially the same as those of all other persons except that in many cases these needs have become increased through society's failure to meet them or through physical or mental impairment of the individual. Exceptional persons need to love and be loved, to have acceptance and respect from their fellows, to have education suited to their needs, to have opportunity to use their talents to fullest possible capacity in the interest of themselves and of others, to have opportunity for spiritual development, and to be identified with a church. These and other needs they have in common with all persons.

2. The psychological handicaps imposed upon exceptional persons are often more serious than the physical or mental impairments. The barriers to communication and fellowship raised by those who

fail to understand and accept them bring to exceptional persons a sense of frustration which in itself is damaging and which may aggravate the basic impairment.

3. Physically and mentally impaired persons have capacities for useful living far beyond what is usually understood. Many of them, with proper training and education, can fill significant occupational, social, and religious roles.

4. Though the basic needs of exceptional persons are the same as those of all persons, the meeting of their needs is usually more difficult and calls for special effort on the part of churches, schools, and other agencies. Though one of the greatest needs is for the respect and acceptance of everyone, special training and skill are called for in those who work with exceptional persons in Christian education, as well as in secular education.

5. When abnormal behavior develops on the part of an exceptional person it is to be understood not as an inevitable factor of the handicap but as a way of life being worked out in the struggle for normal satisfactions. It is likely to be a response to the psychological barriers confronting the person, fully as much as a response to his basic handicap.

6. One of the embarrassing barriers with which many churches

confront physically handicapped persons is the inaccessibility of their buildings. Long flights of steps in front and stairs within prevent many persons not ordinarily thought of as exceptional (those with weak hearts, for instance) from participation in church activities. This is being overcome in many new buildings, but many churches with older buildings have not yet made the necessary adaptations to handicapped persons.

#### **Recommendations to the churches**

The consultation of last October opened with plenary sessions at which the programs carried on by agencies working with exceptional persons were interpreted. Then the delegates divided into several groups for intensive work in specified areas of the church's work with exceptional persons. The results of this intensive work were shared with all and discussed in further plenary sessions. From these discussions certain recommendations were lifted for special emphasis. Important among them were the following:

1. It is important that a church establish communication with the families in its community that have members with physical or mental handicaps. Often such a family has a sense of embarrassment, fears that the handicapped member will be subjected to ridicule if he at-

tempts to participate in church activities, and is uninformed as to how to secure the special help needed. Parents may even fear that their child's handicap is punishment for some sin they may have committed. A church can often be of great service to a family by extending understanding friendship and assistance.

2. In extending this friendly counseling it is important that church leaders have a clear understanding of what are the responsibilities of society to exceptional persons. Families are sometimes unaware of the services they have every right to expect from the community or state. An informed church can help families avail themselves of these services.

3. It is suggested that churches consider as one of their most important responsibilities that of public interpretation. Great progress has been made in the understanding and serving of exceptional persons. Yet there is a constant need for interpretation that will help people achieve an understanding of the handicapped as real persons, with more normal than abnormal characteristics, and needing acceptance and respect as persons most of all. It is important, also, that the public be informed as to its responsibilities toward exceptional persons. Churches are in unique position to do the interpreting.

4. Whenever possible it is recommended that exceptional persons be assimilated into regular groups in the church. Adaptations of program need to be made when an attempt to participate without these special provisions would bring threat of failure or embarrassment. Except for these necessary adaptations, exceptional persons should be encouraged to participate normally.

5. It must be recognized that in individual cases an exceptional person is not ready for assimilation. An attempt to participate in an active group life would be dangerous or would expose the person to inevitable failure and embarrassment. Yet, in a protected environment the person may develop rapidly. For these persons, it is recommended that a church, or churches working in co-operation, provide the special groups needed, so that spiritual and social opportunities may be available to all.

6. Churches are urged to take advantage of the consultation services available from state and private agencies working with exceptional persons. These services are much more readily available than is commonly understood. In many instances it is unwise for a church to attempt to minister to an exceptional person or his family without the consultation of the specialist. Often the person is al-

ready known to the agency and counsel is immediately available.

7. It is strongly recommended that churches make serious study of their buildings and equipment to discover what special provisions need to be made so that handicapped persons will not face physical barriers to participation.<sup>1</sup>

8. It is recommended that exceptional persons be assimilated in regular church camps whenever possible, but also that churches be sure that their camps conform to the highest standards of health and safety. Churches are urged *not* to develop special camps for exceptional persons, but to leave that responsibility upon the agencies that specialize in services to those persons.

9. It is recommended that churches take seriously the training of leaders for work with exceptional persons. There are two facets of this need. Inasmuch as basic human needs are the same with all persons, and most persons are exceptional to some degree, all leaders should be given more thorough training in the understanding of persons and their needs. There is also need for leaders trained for special responsibilities with exceptional persons, to work with them either within regular groups or in special groups.

10. It is suggested that many more consultations such as this one be held, nationally, in areas, and

locally. Specialists are available to most communities from agencies located within a short distance, who could meet with church leaders to plan for more effective service to exceptional persons. In local communities these consultations might be either short in length and frequent, or for two or three days. In larger areas the longer consultations would be advisable.

11. Exceptional persons need a sense of being a part of a church, even if they are unable to participate in its regular activities. The church's responsibility goes beyond "service to" exceptional persons. Relationships should be made possible in which the individual can be a vital part of the church and its fellowship, however complete or limited may be his physical participation. Through private or family devotions, study, pastoral calls, and in many cases actual church work that can be done at home, many handicapped persons have had meaningful identification with a church.

12. It is strongly recommended that the needs of exceptional persons be faced by churches working together and working in co-operation with the specialized agencies. When special groups are needed it is often best for one church to serve the whole community with one type of group, while some other church does the same with another type of group. Public in-

terpretation should be planned co-operatively. Relationships with agencies need to be established by the churches together. Leadership training is best approached co-operatively. Vocational counseling and service can usually be provided best through a pooling of

effort. These and many other concerns call for the combined effort of churches and agencies working in close co-operation.

<sup>1</sup> Literature on this subject is available from the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc., 11 South LaSalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.

## Lincoln

Sometimes, as we contemplate our own stumbling progress—or lack of progress—we get consolation from the confessions of our contemporaries and from reading biography.

Too often we erroneously think of a man like Abraham Lincoln rising directly from a log cabin to the Presidency, with only an occasional heartache—mostly romantic—to bother him.

The record is different:

- 1832—Defeated as candidate for legislature.
- 1833—Failed in business, losing his home and everything he owned.
- 1838—Defeated as candidate for Speaker.
- 1840—Defeated as candidate for elector.
- 1843—Defeated as candidate for Commissioner of General Land Office, and as candidate for congressional nomination.
- 1848—Defeated as candidate for re-election to congress.
- 1855—Defeated as candidate for United States senator.
- 1856—Defeated as candidate for the vice-presidency.
- 1858—Defeated as candidate for United States senator again.

Lincoln enjoyed few years free from disappointment and humiliation.



# Rosebud Letters

by FLORENCE DUNCAN LONG

DOES your church recognize, or give some special attention to new babies and their parents? Of course, your church school has a Cradle Roll Department, and the new babies are enrolled, and receive a clever membership card. However, special recognition by the church is a pleasant gesture which makes a lasting impression on most parents.

A church with which I am connected has a beautiful custom of welcoming these wee folks, and showing interest in the family.

On the first Sunday following the arrival of a new baby in the home of a member of the church, or congregation, the baby's name, date of birth, and the names of the parents are published in the church bulletin.

Then a red rosebud is placed in a bud vase in the sanctuary, and mention is made of the baby whom it honors, and prayer is made for the baby and parents. When the morning service is ended, the rosebud is taken home by the father, if he is present. If he is not, the pastor, or a friend delivers it in the afternoon.

Sometime during the following week, the pastor sends what he re-

fers to as a "Rosebud Letter." This is written and addressed to the baby, and it begins, "This is probably the first letter you have received." He tells about the rosebud, and how it listened in the sanctuary to the songs and the prayers. The prayer was, he said, that as the Child Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature," and the rosebud unfolded in all of its beauty, the baby would also grow.

He speaks of when the child will be big enough to be brought to church, and says the pastor and the church are his friends.

The letter concludes with the beautiful benediction:

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Most parents will greatly appreciate this evidence of interest and concern on the part of the pastor, and it can well be an influence in drawing and keeping the family close to the church. And what a lovely keepsake the "Rosebud Letter" will be for the baby!